



Information Note TC/IN 0004/2023

To: The Managerial Authorities of Recognised Primary, Secondary, Community and Comprehensive Schools and The Chief Executives of Education and Training Boards

COVID-19: Changes to Special Leave with Pay from 22nd May 2023 for Teachers and Special Needs Assistants employed in recognised Primary and Post Primary Schools

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Information Note notifies employers of changes to COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay (SLWP) for the public service, as directed by the Department of Expenditure and Public Reform (DPER).
- 1.2 These changes are to take account of the recent changes to self-isolation period requirements in line with current public health advice.
- 1.3 The changes in this Information Note apply to teachers and special needs assistants (employees) employed in recognised primary and post primary schools, who commence COVID-19 SLWP from 22nd May 2023 onwards.
- 1.4 The changes to COVID-19 SLWP must be implemented by each employer and all employees must adhere to these changes.
- 1.5 Please note this Information Note should be read in conjunction with [Circular 0038/2022](#) in relation to working and leave arrangements for employees.

2. COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay

- 2.1 In line with paragraph 2.2.2 of [Circular 0038/2022](#), Special Leave with Pay applies where an employee who (a) begins to display COVID-19 symptoms or (b) receives a positive COVID-19 PCR/antigen test result.
- 2.2 The current HSE advice in relation to self-isolation is available at link: [If you have COVID-19-HSE.ie](#). The HSE currently advises that a person must self-isolate for a period of 5 days.
- 2.3 As public health advice may change, please always refer to the [HSE website](#) for the most up to date information.

3. Changes to COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay with effect from 22nd May 2023

- 3.1 From 22nd May 2023, where an employee begins to display COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, a maximum limit of 5 consecutive days Special Leave with Pay (includes weekends/school closures), in any one instance, will apply.
- 3.2 Where the employee is medically unfit for work after the 5 consecutive days, the terms and conditions of the Sick Leave Scheme will apply.
- 3.3 For an employee who commences COVID-19 SLWP prior to 22nd May 2023, their maximum entitlement is 7 consecutive days, in line with [Circular 0038/2022](#).

4. Application and Recording Procedure for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay

- 4.1 In line with paragraph 2.5 of [Circular 0038/2022](#), an employee who begins to display COVID-19 symptoms or who has received a positive COVID-19 antigen/PCR test result must complete the Application Form at Appendix A of the Circular, to apply for COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay.
- 4.2 The employee who receives a positive COVID-19 antigen test result must currently report this result on the [HSE portal](#). The employee must provide their employer with confirmation of this HSE record, as supporting evidence (screenshot of relevant HSE text message is acceptable as evidence), including the test date. In the event that the HSE portal is no longer available, a screenshot of the positive test result is acceptable, as evidence of the positive test result.
- 4.3 The employee who receives a positive COVID-19 PCR test result must provide their employer with supporting evidence of the positive COVID-19 PCR test result, including the test date.
- 4.4 For schools using the Department's OLCS, Special Leave with Pay must be recorded on the OLCS by the employer under 'Personal Leave', sub-category titled 'COVID-19: Special Leave With Pay'. ETB schools must record this leave on their relevant ETB system.
- 4.5 The employer must satisfy themselves with the documentary evidence provided by the employee, before recording the period of COVID-19 Special Leave with Pay on the OLCS/relevant ETB system.

5. Circulation of Information Note

- 5.1 Please ensure that this Information Note is circulated to all members of the Board of Management/Education and Training Boards and its contents are brought to the attention of all teachers and SNAs in your employment, including those on leave of absence.
- 5.2 This Information Note can be accessed on the Department's website at [gov.ie](#).

James Walsh
Principal Officer
Teacher/SNA Terms & Conditions Section
15th May, 2023